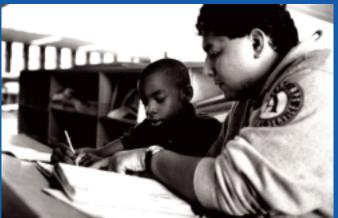
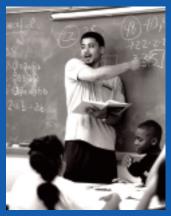
Early Findings

Executive Summary December 2004













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Corporation for National and Community Service

Office of Research and Policy Development

December 2004

Created in 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service engages more than 1.5 million Americans annually in improving communities through service. The Corporation supports service at national, state, and local levels through:

Senior Corps, the network of programs that helps Americans age 55 and older use their skills and experience in service opportunities that address the needs of their communities. Senior Corps includes the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Foster Grandparent Program, and Senior Companion Program;

AmeriCorps, whose members serve with local and national organizations to meet community needs while earning education awards to help finance college or training; and

Learn and Serve America, which helps link community service and learning objectives for youth from kindergarten through college as well as youth in community-based organizations.

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Upon request, this material will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities. This report is also available on the Corporation's Web site at: http://www.nationalservice.org.

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Early Findings Executive Summary

Overview

Serving Country and Community: A Longitudinal Study of Service in AmeriCorps is an evaluation to assess the long-term impact of AmeriCorps participation on members' civic engagement, education, employment, and life skills.¹ The study compares changes in the attitudes and behaviors of AmeriCorps members over time to those of similarly interested individuals not enrolled in AmeriCorps, controlling for interest in national and community service, member and family demographics, and prior civic engagement. Findings in this report are based on data from three rounds of data collection; most of the outcomes assessed are based on data collected approximately one year after members enrolled in the program although a limited number of impacts cover the period three years after enrollment.

Overall, the study found that participation in AmeriCorps led to many positive impacts on members. Effects of participation were especially strong in the area of civic engagement, a key priority for AmeriCorps. There were statistically significant increases in: members' connection to community, knowledge about problems facing their community, participation in community-based activities, and personal growth through service. AmeriCorps participation also led to meaningful impacts on employmentrelated outcomes. The study did not identify statistically significant impacts on measures of members' attitude toward education or educational attainment, or on selected life skills. The effects of AmeriCorps participation were not concentrated in particular subgroups defined by member demographics, but were experienced by members of all types. Findings in this report reflect only the initial results of a long-term

AmeriCorps programs are designed to:

- · Meet human needs through service
- Develop participants
- Strengthen communities

study and the final effects of AmeriCorps participation may not be known for sev-

The study was conducted by Abt Associates Inc., an independent social policy and research firm, under contract to the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Background

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a United States government agency established in 1993 to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community service. Corporation programs provide valuable assistance to local nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, charities, and schools by engaging members and volunteers in education programs, tutoring or mentoring at-risk youth, building homes for low-income people, protecting the environment, responding to disasters, recruiting and managing community volunteers, and building the capacity of local organizations. The Corporation is working with the USA Freedom Corps to promote a national culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility.

AmeriCorps, a national program administered by the Corporation, provides grants to nonprofit organizations and government entities to support members and volunteers serving in national and community service programs. AmeriCorps is comprised of three major programs: AmeriCorps*State and National, AmeriCorps*VISTA, and

AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC). In exchange for a year of full-time or sustained parttime service, AmeriCorps participants receive an education award that can be used toward higher education or vocational training, or to repay qualified student loans. Members also receive a subsistence stipend while they serve. A key goal of AmeriCorps is to develop members' ethic of service and civic responsibility and to increase their educational opportunities and engagement in service with people of diverse backgrounds. AmeriCorps*State and National and AmeriCorps*VISTA members serve with hundreds of local community-based organizations and national organizations including Habitat for Humanity, the American Red Cross, and Boys and Girls Clubs. AmeriCorps*NCCC members serve in teams to meet community needs in cooperation with nonprofit organizations and state and local agencies. In the 1999–2000 program year (the year from which the study sample was drawn), over 40,000 members enrolled in the three AmeriCorps programs.

This study focuses on two of the AmeriCorps programs authorized by the National and Community Service Act of 1990: AmeriCorps*State and National and AmeriCorps*NCCC.2

AmeriCorps*State and National is the largest of the AmeriCorps programs, supporting participants through a network of local community-based organizations, educational institutions, and other agencies. One-third of AmeriCorps*State and National grant funds are distributed by a populationbased formula to Governor-appointed state service commissions, which in turn make grants to local nonprofits and public agencies. One percent of

program funds are set aside for tribal entities, and one percent are set aside for U.S. territories. Roughly 23 percent of grant funds are awarded to national nonprofits operating national service projects in two or more states. The remaining grant funds are awarded to state service commissions on a competitive basis to fund local nonprofit and public entities operating community service programs.

AmeriCorps*State and National members are recruited by nonprofits, schools, and other agencies to help address local community needs. Participants in the State and National program must be at least 17 years of age, and there is no upper age limit. About three-quarters of the members served full-time in the 1999-2000 program year, with the remaining members engaging in sustained part-time service. AmeriCorps*State and National programs address community needs in the areas of education, public safety, human needs, homeland security, and the environment. The organizations receiving grants, referred to here as sponsoring organizations, are responsible for recruiting, selecting,

and supervising AmeriCorps members. In most programs, AmeriCorps members provide services at their sponsoring organization, examples of which include schools and neighborhood health clinics. Other sponsoring organizations partner with other local organizations, referred to as *host sites*, where the AmeriCorps members provide services.

AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) is a tenmonth, full-time, residential service program for men and women between the ages of 18 and 24. Inspired by the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, the program combines the best practices of civilian and military service. AmeriCorps*NCCC members live and train in teams at five regional campuses, and serve nonprofit organizations and government entities in communities across the country. Three of the five campuses occupy closed military bases in South Carolina, Colorado, and California, and the other two are located in a medical facility for veterans in Maryland and a municipal building in Washington, DC. During their tenmonth full-time service period, NCCC members spend considerable time off-campus providing services throughout the region, living temporarily in schools or other facilities provided by the community. Some NCCC members also participate in disaster relief efforts such as flood relief or fighting wild-fires. In 1999–2000, NCCC members spent approximately half their time away from NCCC campuses providing services throughout the states in their regions.

Key characteristics of the two programs are summarized in Exhibit 1.

Research Design

This study was designed to describe AmeriCorps members and the AmeriCorps programs where they serve, and to assess the impact of AmeriCorps on members' attitudes and behavior. During the research design stage, Abt staff visited AmeriCorps programs to observe service activities and talk with administrators, current members, and alumni. The visits were conducted to learn how participation might affect AmeriCorps members, to identify categories of outcomes that might result

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Characteristics of AmeriCorps*State and National and AmeriCorps*NCCC Programs, 1999–2000 Program Year

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	State and National	NCCC
Enrollment	36,000	1,000
Locations	700 grantees ^a	5 regional campuses
Age range of members	17+	18–24
Operated by:	Local, state, and national nonprofits, government agencies	The Corporation
Recruitment	Local ^b	National
Туре	Primarily non-residential	Residential
Participation	Both full-time and part-time	Full-time
FY2000 Corporation funding	\$228 million	\$18 million
Number of service projects per member	Generally one primary project, often with smaller short-term projects	4–6 short-term projects

^a Some grantees operate in more than one location.

^b During the 1999–2000 program year, some applicants to AmeriCorps*State and National were identified through a national recruitment effort implemented by the Corporation. Those applicants were referred to local programs based on their geographic and service interests for consideration as part of those programs' standard selection and enrollment process.

from participation, and to develop a theory of change or logic model that describes the hypothesized relationship between the experience and member outcomes. The member outcomes identified were categorized into the following four areas:

- Civic engagement
- Education
- Employment
- Other life skills

The study sample comprises a nationally representative group of over 2,000 fulltime members of the AmeriCorps*State and National program and the AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) enrolled in the 1999-2000 program year, as well as almost 2,000 non-members in comparison groups. The State and National member sample comprises members who enrolled in a nationally representative selection of 108 programs of the approximately 700 AmeriCorps*State and National programs operating during the 1999-2000 program year. The NCCC member sample comprises all first-year members enrolled at three (of five) NCCC regional campuses. Both samples include members who enrolled between

September 1999 and January 2000. The comparison groups comprise individuals who demonstrated both awareness of AmeriCorps and interest in service. The State and National comparison group includes individuals who inquired about AmeriCorps but who did not actually enroll. The NCCC comparison group includes individuals who were accepted into the program but who did not enroll and eligible applicants on the wait list of the program.³

The study included three rounds of surveys with study participants, as shown in Exhibit 2. Baseline information was collected from members and the comparison groups at the beginning of their term of service. Post-program information was collected from State and National members 1–2 months after completing service, from NCCC members during the final weeks of service, and from the comparison groups during a similar time period. A supplemental survey was conducted approximately three years after baseline to collect additional background information to address potential selection bias. Information was also collected from AmeriCorps program directors about the characteristics of the programs in which members were enrolled.

The impact analysis estimated the effects of participation by comparing changes in the outcomes for AmeriCorps participants over time with changes in the outcomes for similar individuals who did not enroll in AmeriCorps (comparison groups), using Propensity Score Analysis to address possible selection bias. The use of a comparison group enables the description of the average effects of treatment on the treated. The effects of participation were estimated separately for State and National and NCCC programs. Most program outcomes were analyzed in terms of gains—the changes between baseline and post-program values of the same measures. These gains (which could be negative as well as positive) were then compared between program members and comparison group members.4 The study used self-reported data5 to explore the effects of participation on these four areas of interest.

The majority of outcomes analyzed in this report are attitudinal, reflecting the hypothesis that program participation leads primarily to attitudinal changes in the short term, followed by longer-term behavioral changes. Because this report reflects the initial stage of a longitudinal study, we expect that more behavioral

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Three Rounds of Participant Surv	Three Rounds of Participant Surveys			
Instrument	Timing ^a	Focus		
Baseline Survey	Members: Within days of enrolling Comparison Group: 3–4 months after inquiring about AmeriCorps (roughly when they might have enrolled)	 Prior service experience Other background characteristics Attitudinal information related to outcomes		
Post-Program Survey	State and National Members: 1–2 months after completing service (approximately 1 year after baseline survey) NCCC Members: During final weeks of service (approximately 10 months after baseline survey) Comparison Group: 12–15 months after baseline survey	 Attitudinal information related to outcomes Information on AmeriCorps program experience (members only 		
Supplemental State and National Member Survey	Members: 3 years after baseline survey (approximately 2 years after most members completed their service) Comparison Group: 3 years after baseline survey	 Additional background information to address selection bias Social networking behavior Additional information on program experience (members only) Limited data on post-program activities 		

outcomes will be measured and analyzed in future stages of the study. This study focused on members serving full time in AmeriCorps. Currently, a larger proportion of members serve less than full time on a part-time or reduced-time basis than in 1999–2000.

Findings on the Impacts of AmeriCorps Participation

Overall, the study found that for numerous civic engagement, education, employment, and life skills outcomes, participation in AmeriCorps*State and National programs and AmeriCorps* NCCC results in positive impacts on members. The effect of participation was consistently positive for the State and National programs across the vast majority of outcome measures, and over half of the outcomes are positive and statistically significant. While the effects of participation in NCCC are more mixed, results are generally positive, with almost one-third of the outcomes demonstrating positive and statistically significant effects on participants. Exhibit 3 presents the findings for individual outcome measures, organized by the four outcome groups. Findings in this report reflect the initial results of a long-term, longitudinal assessment of the effects of participation in AmeriCorps. The longer-term impacts of participation will be assessed in future rounds of the study.

Civic Engagement

The Corporation has an expansive vision for the future of civic engagement in the United States, focusing on involvement, responsibility, and effectiveness. Promoting civic engagement is a primary goal for all of the Corporation's programs; they are encouraged to "use service to enable members to see themselves as problem-solvers, not problems; to become leaders, not just followers; and to take personal responsibility." Because of the importance of service and civic responsibility to the Corporation's mission, over half of the outcomes measured focus on civic engagement.

The study found that participation in both AmeriCorps*State and National and AmeriCorps*NCCC resulted in statistically significant positive impacts on members' connection to community, knowledge about problems facing their community, participation in community-based activities, and personal growth

through service. While AmeriCorps members increased their level of civic engagement on many of the outcome measures of civic engagement, scores for comparison group members typically showed little or no change in this shortterm analysis. These findings are particularly important because at baseline, many AmeriCorps members and their counterparts in the comparison groups already demonstrated a high level of civic engagement. Additionally, there was a positive and significant effect of AmeriCorps participation on volunteering for members without recent volunteering experience. These results are important because they reflect the capacity of AmeriCorps to strengthen existing beliefs in and commitments to civic engagement and community service, and to awaken new ones.

Education

Every AmeriCorps member who completes a full term of service is eligible for an education award of \$4,725. The award can be used for education or training from qualified institutions, or to repay eligible student loans, for a period of seven years after completing service. The award is a clear indication of the Corporation's commitment to advancing the educational prospects of members. Furthermore, individual AmeriCorps programs often support members' attempts to further their own education by providing opportunities to complete their GED or high school diploma. Consistent with this commitment, the study measured the effects of participation on members' attitudes toward their own ability to achieve educational milestones.

Overall, the study found that in the short term, AmeriCorps participation had no significant impacts on measures of educational attitudes or degree attainment. However, it is important to note that individuals in the comparison group had at least one year of opportunity to advance their education, while AmeriCorps participants were engaged in the program. Also, it is important to remember that AmeriCorps members have up to seven years to use their education award, and additional information on the impacts of AmeriCorps service on education may be evident after additional time has passed.

Employment

The Corporation is dedicated to improving the employment options available to AmeriCorps members through member development activities, skill-building service projects, and mentoring opportunities. Additionally, AmeriCorps members have the opportunity to work with public servants, who often supervise members or partner with AmeriCorps programs, providing exposure to potential careers in the public sector.

The study found that AmeriCorps participation had a meaningful impact on both attitudinal and behavioral employment outcomes. Most notably, participants in AmeriCorps*State and National programs were significantly more likely to choose careers in public service compared to the comparison group. While NCCC participation does not appear to have impacted career choices, NCCC members did experience statistically significant increases in their work skills compared to the comparison group. We expect that in the future, it will be possible to assess the longer-term impacts of participation on these and other employment-related outcomes. In the meantime, short-term results indicate that the Corporation's efforts to support member development and skill building are yielding favorable results.

Teamwork and Other Life Skills

The Corporation encourages its grantees to provide training, team-building, and reflection opportunities to support AmeriCorps members' ability to interact in team settings with groups of diverse individuals. The final set of outcome measures assessed by this study focused on respondents' interpersonal skills, including attitudes toward cultural and ethnic diversity and behavior in group settings.

The study did not identify any significant positive effects of AmeriCorps participation on the selected life skills, including group interactions. Furthermore, participation in NCCC yielded the only statistically significant negative result in the study, for respondents' appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity. Given the short-term nature of these findings, additional time may be needed to assess the impact of AmeriCorps participation on teamwork and life skills outcomes.

Exhibit 3

Outcomes of Interest

The impact analysis estimated the effects of participation in AmeriCorps by comparing changes in the outcomes for AmeriCorps participants over time with changes in the outcomes for similar individuals who did not enroll in AmeriCorps (comparison groups), using Propensity Score Analysis to address possible selection bias. Positive findings are indicated by a "+", negative findings by a "–". Only statistically significant findings, indicated by one or more asterisks, should be interpreted as meaningful impacts attributable to AmeriCorps participation.

	State and National	NCCC
Civic Engagement-Related Outcomes		
Connection to Community (Attitude) represents the respondent's opinion about the strength of his/her connection to the community, as represented by the strength of feelings toward the community, including attachment, awareness, and commitment.	+ **	+ **
Community Problem Identification (Attitude/Knowledge) represents the respondent's self-assessed understanding of social problems in his/her community, such as environment, public health, and crime.	+ **	+ *
Neighborhood Obligations (Attitude) represents the respondent's opinion about the importance of being active in his/her neighborhood, including reporting crimes, keeping the neighborhood clean, and participating in neighborhood organizations.	+ **	+
Civic Obligations (Attitude) represents the respondent's opinion about the importance of participating in various civic activities, including voting in elections and serving on a jury.	+*	+
Personal Effectiveness of Community Service (Attitude) represents the respondent's opinion about the impacts of his/her prior volunteer activities during the previous year with respect to making community contributions, developing attachments to the community, and making a difference.	+ **	-
Personal Growth Through Community Service (Attitude) represents the respondent's assessment of the impacts of his/her prior volunteer activities during the previous year with respect to personal growth, including exposure to new ideas, changing beliefs, and learning about the real world.	+ **	+ **
Local Civic Efficacy (Attitude) represents the respondent's opinion about the feasibility of working with local or state government to meet a range of community needs, such as fixing a pothole or getting an issue on a statewide ballot.	+ **	+*
Grassroots Efficacy (Attitude) represents the respondent's opinion about the feasibility of starting a grassroots effort to meet a range of community needs, such as starting an after-school program or organizing a park cleanup program.	+ **	+
Community-Based Activism (Behavior) provides respondent's reports of the frequency with which he/she participates in community-based activities, including attending community meetings and writing to newspapers to voice opinions.	+ **	+ **
Volunteering Participation (Behavior) indicates whether the respondent served as a volunteer at any point during the two years following Fall 2000.	+	+ **
Engagement in the Political Process (Behavior) provides respondent's reports of the frequency with which he/she participates in activities intrinsic to the political process, including learning about candidates and voting in local elections.	+	_
National Voting Participation (Behavior) represents whether the respondent voted in the 2000 national election.	+	+

Exhibit 3

Outcomes of Interest

	State and National	NCCC
Education-Related Outcomes		
Confidence in Ability to Obtain an Education (Attitude) represents the respondent's opinion about the feasibility of pursuing and obtaining an education.	+	+
Acceptance of Responsibility for Educational Success (Attitude) represents the respondent's judgment about the extent to which he/she is personally responsible for his/her academic achievements.	+	+
Educational Progress (Behavior) indicates the level of education attained three years after baseline (Fall 2002/Winter 2003).	-	-
Emloyment-Related Outcomes		
Importance of Service-Oriented Careers (Attitude) represents the respondent's opinion about the importance of working in a position that contributes to others, such as working to correct inequalities and being of direct service to people.	+	-
Acceptance of Responsibility for Employment Success (Attitude) represents the espondent's judgment about the extent to which he/she is personally responsible for his/her success in getting a job.	+ **	-
Basic Work Skills (Behavior/Experience) provides the respondent's report of the amount of experience he/she has had with fundamental work skills, including gathering and analyzing information, motivating co-workers, and managing time.	+ *	+ **
Public Service Employment (Behavior) indicates whether the respondent was employed in the public sector three years after the baseline survey (Fall 2002/Winter 2003). Public sector employment was defined as education, social work, public safety, arts, religion, or full-time military service.	+*	+
Outcomes Related to Teamwork and Other Life Skills		
Appreciation of Cultural and Ethnic Diversity (Attitude) represents the respondent's opinion about the importance and desirability of relationships between people who lo not share the same cultural and/or ethnic background.	+	_ **
Constructive Group Interactions (Behavior/Experience) provides respondents' reports of the frequency with which they participated in group situations during which constructive interactions, such as working out conflicts and sharing ideas, occurred.	+	-
Constructive Personal Behavior in Groups (Behavior) provides respondents' reports of the requency with which he/she personally uses techniques for encouraging constructive group interactions, such as encouraging participation by other team members and upporting others' right to be heard.	+	-

- ** Indicates statistical significance at the .01 level.
- * Indicates statistical significance at the .05 level.
- + Indicates positive finding
- Indicates negative finding.

This report provides an overview of findings from the study. More detailed information on study findings are available in the full report and corresponding appendices on the Corporation's website at www.nationalservice.org.

Differences in Outcomes for State and National and NCCC

Both programs had numerous significant effects on measures of civic engagement, as well as on members' report of the amount of experience with basic work skills. However, findings are less consistent across the two programs for other measures, with the State and National program resulting in more statistically significant positive outcomes.

Several reasons may account for the differences in outcomes between the State and National and NCCC programs. First, as noted earlier, they are two different programs, operating in different contexts, and enrolling members with quite different demographics. (Information about the characteristics and AmeriCorps experiences of members from the two programs is discussed in more detail in the full report.) Second, the post-program survey of NCCC members was administered during their last week or two of participation in the program, a period emotionally charged for many members, and the timing may have influenced their responses to the survey. In contrast, most State and National members completed their postprogram survey several months after they had left the program. Finally, the study sample for State and National is much larger than that for the smaller NCCC program. It is possible to detect smaller differences between the treatment and comparison groups when using larger samples.

Differential Effects of Member Characteristics, Program Characteristics, and Member Experiences

As a secondary objective of the study, the differential effects of participation by member subgroups, as defined by member and program characteristics, were also explored. For selected civic engagement outcomes, the study explored the difference in effects of participation for voting and volunteering experience. Differential effects of prior civic engagement were found for only one outcome, and only for State and National participation: there was a positive and significant effect of AmeriCorps participation on volunteering activity for members without recent volunteering experience. In addition, a broader analysis explored whether the effect of AmeriCorps service differed across demographic subgroups, including race/ethnicity, educational

attainment, gender, age, and religious exposure. Notably, the effects of AmeriCorps participation were not concentrated in particular subgroups, but were experienced by members of all types.

Similarly, the study examines whether effects of participation differed across members enrolled in different State and National programs. Differences between programs accounted for very little of the difference in member outcomes. Overall, outcomes for members within the same AmeriCorps program were as similar (or dissimilar) as they were to outcomes for members in other AmeriCorps programs. Consistent with these findings, there was no consistent effect across outcomes of interest for any specific program characteristic or reported member experience. The small number of NCCC sites in the study precludes a similar analysis of the NCCC program experience.

Conclusion

The key objective of this study was to examine the effects of participation in AmeriCorps on members. Overall, the study found that for numerous outcomes, participation in AmeriCorps resulted in positive effects for members in both AmeriCorps*State and National and AmeriCorps*NCCC. The effect of participation was particularly strong on measures of civic engagement, a key priority for the Corporation. AmeriCorps members increased their level of civic engagement in most areas, such as connection to community, neighborhood obligations, and local civic efficacy, while scores for the comparison group generally showed little or no change or declined in this short-term analysis. Findings were consistently positive for the State and National programs across the vast majority of outcome measures. While the effects of participation in NCCC were more mixed, results are generally positive.

Findings in this report reflect only the initial results of a long-term longitudinal study. The longer-term impact of participation in AmeriCorps may not be known for several years. Subsequent rounds will assess whether the early outcomes identified in this study will be sustained over time or whether new areas of program impact will appear.

Notes

¹This report provides an overview of early findings from *Serving Country and Community: A Longitudinal Study of Service in AmeriCorps.* More detailed information on study findings is included in the full report and appendices, which are available at www.nationalservice.org. Detailed information about the characteristics of AmeriCorps members is presented in an earlier report, *A Profile of AmeriCorps Members at Baseline*, which is also available on the Corporation's website.

²The third AmeriCorps program, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), is authorized under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, and was not included in this study. VISTA is a highly decentralized program; its members serve individually or in small groups and focus primarily on building capacity in local communities. In contrast, State and National and NCCC members focus on the provision of direct services. Since the VISTA experience and member profiles differ appreciably from the other programs, the effects of service participation may be different from those for State and National and NCCC members. Additional information about AmeriCorps programs and structure can be found at www.nationalservice.org.

⁵To mitigate the threat of selection bias resulting from differences between participant and comparison group members, Propensity Score Analysis (PSA) was incorporated into the design of the post-program analysis. Treatment effects were estimated using PSA, comparing treatment cases with comparison group cases that have a similar probability of selection into treatment based on their measured characteristics. Additional information on the PSA is included in the full report and appendices.

^aA note on survey timing: The duration of AmeriCorps programs was generally between 10 and 12 months. Cases were released for the post-program and post-program supplemental interviews at 12 and 36 months after baseline interview. Most respondents were interviewed within a few weeks of survey release. In some instance, it took longer (up to five months) to locate and interview respondents.

⁴Gains for treatment and comparison groups are described in detail in the full report.

⁵Data sources for this report include baseline, post-program, and post-program supplemental surveys. Only AmeriCorps members in the study who completed all three rounds of data collection and for whom there was a match in the comparison group are included in the analysis. See the appendices to the full report for additional information about the analysis sample.

⁶AmeriCorps*State Application Guidelines. In Corporation for National Service: 2000 Administration and Program Guide.

Acknowledgements

This study was conducted by Abt Associates Inc. for the Corporation for National and Community Service. The report authors wish to acknowledge the contributions of many individuals to this study. First of all, we would like to thank the individuals in the study sample—both AmeriCorps members and comparison group members—for the time they spent answering our surveys and talking with interviewers on the telephone. We appreciate their time, candor, and thoughtfulness.

We also want to thank the AmeriCorps*State and National and AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) programs that participated in the study for their help in administering the baseline survey to incoming members. We especially want to recognize the eight programs that participated in the process study, hosting us through rounds of site visits and responding to our questions, and allowing us access to staff, members, and service projects. During the design of this study, the thoughtful insights of the AmeriCorps programs we visited were essential to the construction of our

Theory of Change, providing the foundation for development of the outcome measures.

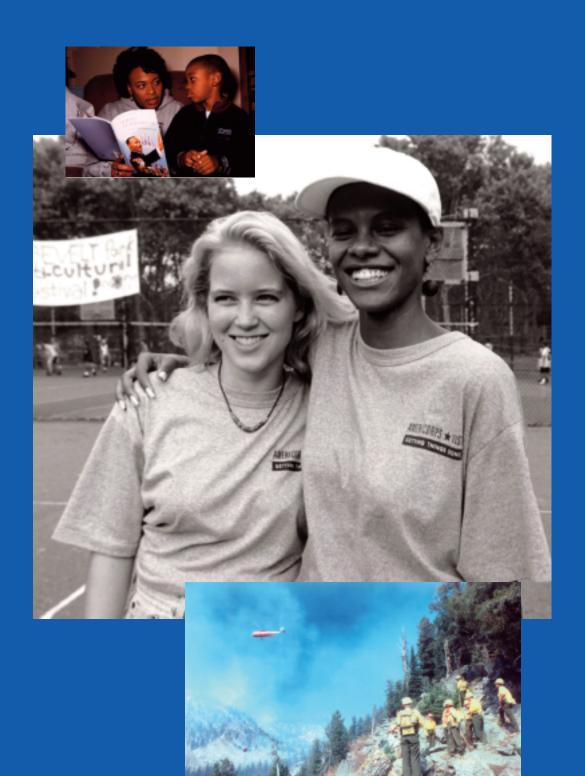
Numerous individuals at the Corporation for National and Community Service provided guidance and thoughtful advice throughout the five-year course of the study, beginning with Susan Labin, our original Project Officer. Susan provided the initial enthusiasm and dedication to detail that helped shape the design of our outcome measures. Marcia Scott followed as Project Officer and guided us through much of the data collection and analysis design. Her contributions to this study, along with those of her colleagues Lance Potter, Bill Bentley, Charles Helfer, and Carol Hafford, were invaluable. We especially appreciate their support and advice. The staff at the Office of Research and Policy Development guided this study through the final data collection and analysis. Kevin Cramer, David Reingold, Robert Grimm, and Nathan Dietz helped shape the analysis with their insightful comments and questions. We also recognize the ongoing support for this study provided by the Corporation's Board of Directors and, in

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